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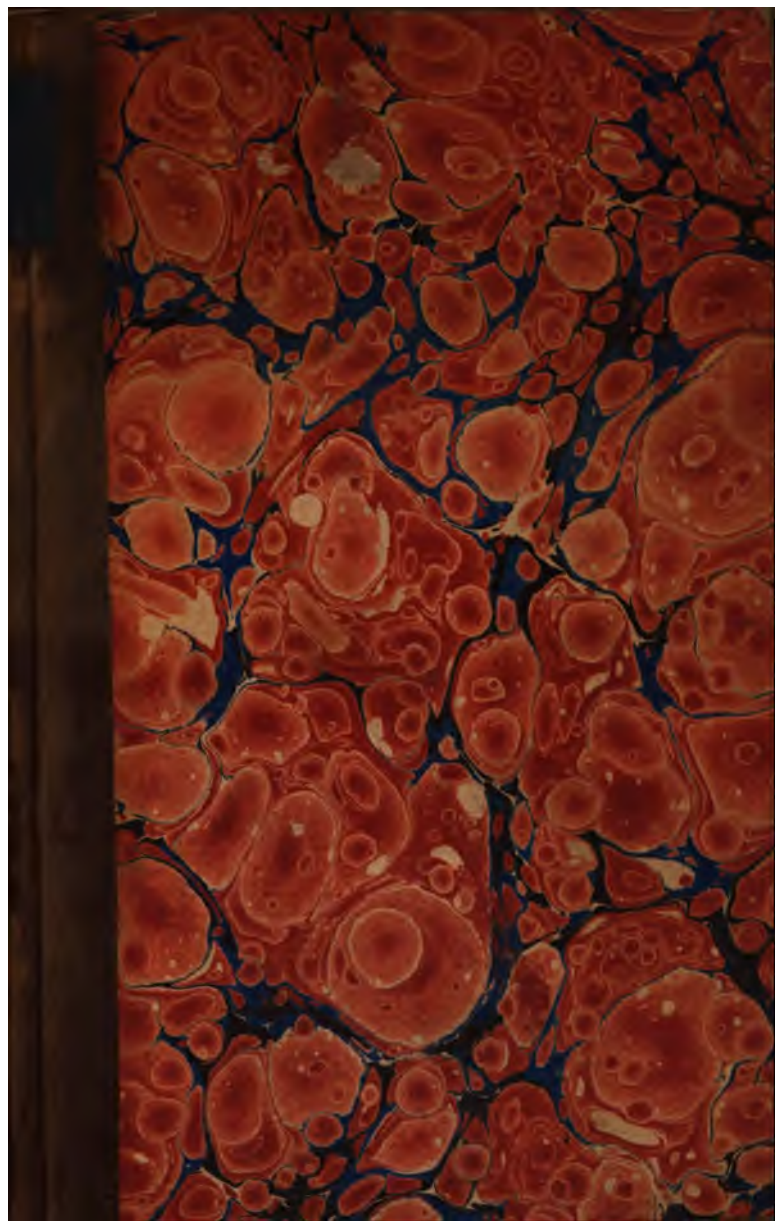
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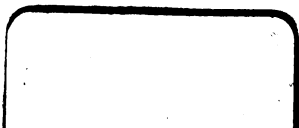




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THE CONNECTION OF RITUAL OBSERVANCES WITH THE  
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN ECONOMY:

# A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE  
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PAUL, LONDON,  
AT  
THE VISITATION  
OF THE  
RT. HON. AND RT. REV.

CHARLES JAMES, LORD BISHOP OF LONDON,  
ON  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12TH, 1842,

BY THE  
REV. THOMAS AINGER, M. A.,  
PERPETUAL CURATE OF HAMPSTEAD,  
AND DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ROXBURGHE.

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## 1 CORINTHIANS XIV, 26.

LET ALL THINGS BE DONE UNTO EDIFYING.

THERE were peculiar causes which rendered a splendid ritual almost essential to the Jewish economy. However gross may have been the superstitions and lying wonders of the Egyptian priesthood, we possess evidence not only of their advancement in civilisation and the arts, but also of the imposing magnificence of their temples and their forms of divine worship. The captives of Israel were prohibited from gaining any knowledge of their mysteries, or taking any share in the gorgeous ceremonials of their masters; still the sight of what was going on around them could hardly fail of producing a deep and permanent effect upon their minds. True, they had been led forth from the land of bondage under the protection of the stretched-out arm which had smitten Egypt and subdued it; and as long as the presence of the Lord God was manifested by miracles and the visible Shekinah, they were contented to acknow-



ledge his power and to follow his guidance. But let the symbol of his immediate presence be, but for awhile, withdrawn, or the miraculous evidences of his care over them intermitted, and on the instant they reverted to the prejudices and associations which had grown up with them during their long residence in Egypt. Not only did they contrast the privations endured in the wilderness with their former abundance, when they drank of the sweet waters of the river, and “sate by the flesh pots and did eat bread to the full,”\* but they desired also to imitate those forms of idolatry to which they had long been familiar; so that Aaron was constrained to make them “a molten calf, and they said, These be thy gods and Israel which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”† Their ceremonial law, therefore, was arranged so as to answer a twofold purpose: not only was it typical of good things to come; it was also invested with a degree of outward splendour to attract and impress the senses, and it was so closely interwoven with every action and event of their lives, however trivial, that their distinctive characteristics as the chosen people could never be lost sight of for a moment.

The covenant established by Moses was temporary in its nature and provisions; it was to make way for something more perfect and universal, and the ritual connected with it must of course be abrogated when the seed should come to whom the

\* Exodus xvi, 3.

† Exodus xxxii, 4.

original promise was made. But as that fulness of the times approached, the authorized expounders of the Jewish law added to that ceremonial "yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear."\* The "weightier matters"† were superseded by the traditions of the elders, until forms devised, in the first instance, as aids to devotion and godly practice, became substitutes for both. It was this substitution of the outward symbol for the inward spirit, which drew down our Lord's severest reproofs upon the Pharisees. It was not the ritual, but the abuse of it which moved his righteous indignation: he would not have rebuked them because they washed "the outside of the cup and the platter,"‡ had they not been full of uncleanness "within;" he would not have been at such pains to defend his disciples when they ate "with unwashed hands,"§ had not those who accused them regarded these superfluous ablutions as more important than the purifying of the heart and the life. "The scribes and pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not."|| He condemns all heartless and hypocritical forms; he intimates that the time was coming when the ordinances adapted to the national church of the Jews should cease, as being no longer practicable

\* Acts xv, 10.      † Matthew xxiii, 23.      ‡ Matthew xxiii, 25.

§ Matthew xv, 20.

|| Matthew xxiii, 2, 3.

in the universal church he came upon earth to establish : “ The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in the mountains nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father ;” \* but he pronounces no general sentence against ritual observances, he himself set an example of the strictest legal conformity, and in condemning those who “ tithed mint and rue and all manner of herbs, while they passed over judgment and the love of God,” † he adds, “ these things ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone.”

He who is himself a spirit seeketh those to worship him who worship in spirit and in truth : ‡ but at the same time “ He knoweth whereof we are made ; he remembereth that we are but dust.” § No modes of devotion can, therefore, be suited to man, in which the bodily functions are not jointly engaged with the affections, the imagination, and the intellect. “ There is,” to use the words of Bishop Buckeridge, “ a mutual excitation : for the soul doth always excite the body, as the musician strikes the instrument ; and the body doth sometimes call home and awaken the soul that wandereth and is heavy in the service of God, and, as an instrument with a sweet melody, doth quicken the soul in this harmony of God’s religion.” || St.

\* John iv, 21.

† Luke xi, 42.

‡ John iv, 23, 24.

§ Psalm ciii, 14.

|| Sermon touching prostration and kneeling in the worship of God. Preached on Passion Sunday, 1617.

Paul feared for his converts in Galatia, "lest he should have bestowed upon them labour in vain," because they observed "days and months and times and years,"\* because "having begun in the spirit they desired to be made perfect in the flesh."† It was this reverting to Mosaic and traditional ordinances to the dereliction of christian truth, which caused St. Paul to speak with such apparent severity of all ceremonial services. And yet the man who shaved his head in Cenchrea because he had a vow,‡ and afterwards purified himself with certain others in the temple at Jerusalem,§ could not have looked upon all outward religious usages as in themselves offensive.

There are very few christian ceremonies directly established on the authority of the New Testament Scriptures. But we may draw some important inferences from those established by our Lord himself and by his Apostles.

And first with respect to those of our Lord's own appointment. Of the blessed Sacraments themselves I do not speak under the title of ceremonies, but only of the specified mode and form of their administration.

As baptism corresponds with the divine ordinance of circumcision, so does the Lord's Supper with the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb. And yet the use of the element of water, prescribed in the

\* Galatians iv, 10, 11.

† Acts xviii, 18.

‡ Galatians iii, 3.

§ Acts xxi, 26.

initiatory sacrament, beautifully as it symbolises the inward purification of the spirit, would seem to have been taken from the practice of the Jews, with whom lustrations by sprinkling or immersion had been long familiar.\*

Again, in that other sacrament, those solemn and affecting words, "Do this in remembrance of me," would seem to have been derived from a similar origin. "The Rabbins," it is stated, "had added both signs and words unto the institution of the Passover prescribed unto them by Moses, eating sour herbs and drinking wine, with these words to both,—‘Take and eat these in remembrance,—Drink this in remembrance.’ Upon which addition and tradition of their’s, our Saviour instituted the Sacrament of his last Supper; in celebrating it with the same words and after the same manner, thereby approving that fact of their’s in particular, and generally, that a church may institute and retain a sign significant."†

In both these instances perpetuity was given by the most awful sanction to ceremonies, adopted, in

\* It is questioned whether, previous to our Lord's time, the rite of baptism was practised among the Jews on the admission of Gentile proselytes. The "divers washings," (*διαφόροι βαπτισμοὶ*) mentioned by St. Paul (Hebrews ix, 10.), are sufficient to mark the close analogy between the Jewish and Christian forms.

† Barlow's "Report of the Second Day's Conference at Hampton Court." See also Waterland's "Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist," Chapter 2nd; who refers to Buxtorf Dissert: vi. de Cœnæ Dominicæ primæ ritibus ac formâ.

the first instance, if not actually devised, by man's judgment: and are we not hence confirmed in our belief, that rites intended for the advancement of God's honour, and the spiritual edification of his servants, will obtain his acceptance and blessing? These, as I said, are of perpetual obligation in the christian church.

But on the other hand, there are ordinances of the apostolic age, which either from altered circumstances have fallen into desuetude, or, in consequence of their abuse, have been distinctly forbidden. In the council of the Apostles at Jerusalem this charge was laid upon the Gentile converts, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen than these necessary things, That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if you keep yourselves ye shall do well!"\* Here we find injunctions of ceremonial abstinence joined with those of moral purity. Neither is there any intimation in the decree itself, that though the latter were unchangeable, the former should, in after times, be modified, and their obligation should cease. In the discussions of the Apostles, the reason is stated which rendered it expedient that the new-made converts should abstain from unclean meats. "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the

\* Acts xv, 28, 29.

synagogue every sabbath day.”\* A public exhibition of their emancipation from legal ordinances would have confirmed the prejudices of the Jews against the Gentile believers, and, therefore, for the sake of others they were commanded to conform “in these necessary things.” But though there was no revocation of the decree in after times, the position of the believers was changed, and the prohibition with respect to food was required no longer; and so entirely had it fallen into disregard at the end of the fourth century, that St. Augustine speaks of it as obsolete and out of date.”†

In another instance we find a practice of the Apostolic times suppressed by ecclesiastical authority, in consequence of the mischief and the scandal which it had occasioned. Of the high antiquity of the agapæ, or love feasts, and of their early abuse, we have evidence in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians.‡ The excesses committed at these feasts were reprov’d by the Laodicean council in the year 361; were subject of deep regret to St.

\* Acts xv, 21.

† Augustin. contra Faust. Lib. xxxii. c. xiii. Ubi ecclesia gentium talis effecta est, ut nullus Israelita carnalis appareat, quis jam hoc Christianus observat, ut turdos vel minutiores aviculas non attingat, nisi quarum sanguis effusus est; aut leporem non edat, si, manu à cervice percussus, nullo cruento vulnere occisus est? Et qui forte pauci adhuc tangere ista formidant, a cæteris irridentur. Quoted by Bingham in the notes to his “Christian Antiquities,” book xvii, chap. v, sect. 20.

‡ 1 Corinthians xi.

Ambrose and St. Augustine a few years later ; and afterwards so grievously degenerated from their original purpose and character, that in the seventh century it was found necessary to suppress them altogether. "So difficult a matter was it," says Bingham, "to extirpate the abuses of ancient custom without destroying the custom itself, which was innocent in its original, and of so great service to the christian church whilst it continued free from abuses, that it was the envy and admiration of the heathen."\*

In our Lord's adoption of certain Jewish ceremonies on the one hand, and consecrating them by an ordinance for ever ; and on the other hand, in the fact of certain apostolic usages having disappeared (and not without sufficient reason from the church), we have the fullest illustration of St. Paul's precept to the Corinthians, "Let all things be done unto edifying."

Indeed it is to this simple and solemn principle that all questions respecting rituals must be referred. The Apostle was, at the time, writing to correct the irregularities and offences which disgraced the public worship of the Corinthian christians, their irreverent mode of celebrating the Eucharist, the confusion and disorder of their religious assemblies, where each one had a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation.† It may, perhaps, strike us with some surprise that

\* Bingham, book xv, chap. vii, sect 9.    † 1 Cor. xi and xiv.



he does not prescribe a fixed ritual to be observed on occasions of such high solemnity and importance; on the contrary, the rules which he gives are most general and comprehensive. He takes occasion to remind them of the circumstances under which the Lord had instituted that holy sacrament, and the mode of its administration. Of these facts, notorious as they must have been to all who were in any degree interested in the gospel history, we can hardly suppose the Corinthian believers to have been ignorant, and we conclude, therefore, that they were recapitulated not only to convince them of their heinous guilt in dishonouring the ordinance itself, but also as a model to be imitated by themselves in celebrating the same holy mysteries: and he concludes his admonitions by saying, "The rest will I set in order when I come."\* To what purpose was this delay? Why did he not describe the forms observed in the church of Philippi which he was then personally superintending, and enjoin them to do likewise? The same inquiries might be made respecting those other religious assemblies in which their various spiritual gifts were made subjects for vain display and unholy contention. Why are not his directions more specific? Why is he content to admonish them in general terms, "that all things be done unto edifying"—"that all things be done decently and in order."† To what end is this discretionary license given them,

\* 1 Corinthians xi, 34.

† 1 Corinthians xiv, 26, 40.

when an authorised ritual would have removed all doubts, and remedied all abuses? Surely his deferring the settlement of these difficulties until he himself should be present among them, implies a desire on his part to take advantage of such rites as he should find to be already established; not so much to change their customs as to amend what was amiss, and to supply what was wanting in them. He was cautious in hazarding any direct innovations, he would not offend their harmless prejudices, he would not suppress practices which might have been productive of salutary and solemn impressions: he proposed first of all to obtain an accurate knowledge of their peculiar condition, their wants and errors, the degree in which their present religious system was effective, and where it was capable of improvement; and when he had ascertained all these particulars, he would proceed to settle the ritual and discipline of the Corinthian church.

It was in a kindred spirit with that of the Apostle, that the reformers of our own church regulated her rites and offices of public devotion. Their's was a task demanding so much of wisdom and forbearance and piety, such a profound acquaintance with christian truth, such a freedom from prejudice, and, at the same time, such a steady determination to stem the current of causeless innovation, that their marvellous success must be thankfully ascribed to His preventing and assist

ing grace, who "guideth the meek in judgment, and such as are gentle, them doth he learn his way."\* "Whereas, in this our time (I quote from the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer) the minds of men are so diverse that some think it a great matter of conscience to depart from a piece of the least of their ceremonies, they be so addicted to their old customs; and again, on the other side, some be so new-fangled that they would innovate all things, and so despise the old that nothing can like them but that is new: it was thought expedient not so much to have respect how to please and satisfy either of these parties, as how to please God and to profit them both." They were far from insensible to the solemn sanctions of antiquity; they reverently retained the forms and the language which had quickened the devotion of saints and confessors in elder times, and so secured to the church militant upon earth a real and constant communion with those of its members whose warfare is accomplished. But all things were done unto edifying. In cleansing the church's robe of wrought gold from all the defilements by which it was overlaid, it was not practicable to renovate all the beauty and glory of the original workmanship. Something must be sacrificed where long-continued abuses had rendered all attempts at restoration hopeless, so that "the abuses could not well be taken away, the thing itself remaining." The re-

\* Psalm xxv, 9.

gret which they experienced under such circumstances is beautifully alluded to in the introduction to the commination service. Some such regret we may suppose to have been felt by Reformers in yet earlier times, to whom I have already alluded, when the agapæ were finally suppressed. But all that was burdensome, superfluous, and unmeaning, all that tended to superstition and ungodliness, they abolished with unsparing decision. St. Paul, in his adaptation of a system of discipline to the Corinthian church, had respect to the peculiar circumstances of its members. In a like spirit our reformers declared "In these our doings we condemn no other nations, nor prescribe anything but to our own people only: for we think it convenient that every country should use such ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition."\*

It is needless to particularize the authorized changes (in themselves neither very numerous nor very important) which have occurred since the settlement of our liturgy by the reformers of our church. Unauthorised changes, however, have taken place, more in the way of omission than of direct innovation, which leave the members of our communion, alike laic and clerical, open to a charge

\* Of ceremonies, why some are abolished and some retained.—  
*Preface to the Book of Common Prayer.*

of anomaly, from their following the directions of the rubric in most instances, but systematically violating it in others. From the altered state of society, from the enormous increase in our population, without any corresponding increase in the number of the christian ministry, and from other like causes which are beyond our own control, a strict adherence to the letter of the rubrics may not always be practicable. I would instance the rubrics prefixed to the order of the administration of the Lord's Supper. Among the countless multitudes who throng our Metropolis and the great towns of the empire, the parochial system must be carried out far more perfectly than it is at present, before those rules can be punctually and precisely obeyed. But this plea will not cover all omissions and variations. Some, indeed, have been so long practised, that the great majority of the members of our church are not aware of their irregularity. They may be traced back, through years of comparative lukewarmness and religious apathy, to that unhappy period in our national history when the altar and the throne were alike trodden underfoot, and a profane contempt of all sacred ordinances was reckoned as the sure indication of a highly spiritual professor. The general dissemination of sounder principles has, in our times, awakened an earnest desire for recovering their original authority to the rubrics of the church. Deeply as we must lament the divisions which have recently arisen among us, and unflinchingly as we

must ever protest against any alliance with that corrupted church, from whose baleful dominion the learning, the piety, and the blood of our forefathers, under God's blessing, have set us free, still we must confess that the religious agitation (which some men consider as an unqualified evil), the recurrence to first principles, the researches into ecclesiastical antiquity, have been mercifully overruled to great and good purposes. They have taught us to know and to value our strength and our resources; to vindicate the legitimate position and authority of our church as an apostolic branch of the church catholic; to venerate her sacraments as the pledges and channels of divine grace; and to labour for the full restoration of her discipline. It is the accomplishment of this aim which has given such peculiar importance to inquiries into rituals and rubrics. If there be any justice or truth in the thoughts which I have, with all humility and deference, suggested on the present occasion, our attempts at restoration must be distinctly limited to those practices which have come down to us with the sanction and on the authority of our reformers.

In the position wherein our church now stands as a missionary church in the noblest sense of that title, labouring to evangelize the world, circumstances may occur, and arrangements be demanded, for which the holy men who compiled our Prayer Book and Articles have made, and could make, no

direct provision. In such instances, the discipline of primitive times may, in the way of precedent or of analogy, guide us to a right judgment. But the domestic economy, if I may so call it, of our national church, may be effectually regulated without moving the disputable questions of earlier usages. As to the mode of restoration it must be done gradually and systematically, with sound discretion, and under authority. In the feverish temper which prevails at present upon such topics as these, individual singularities, however capable they may be of justification, are sure to create scandal and prejudice, and thereby to act as hindrances to the very consummation which it is their professed aim and object to promote. I say their *professed* aim; for to be obtrusively busy about the externals of religion, is often the mark of a little mind inflated by personal vanity and the desire of being singular and conspicuous. When men attach a religious importance to the form and fashion of a vestment, beyond the mere consideration of its decency and propriety; when they institute grave comparisons between the bowing of the head and the flexure of the knee, as if the one were essentially preferable to the other for the outward expression of inward reverential piety, they must be grievously deficient in the Apostle's practical good sense, whose simple directions are, "Let all things be done unto edifying:" "Let all things be  
 ently and in order." Such men must fall

under Hooker's censure, who tells us that "Ceremonies destitute of signification are no better than the idle gestures of men whose broken wits are not masters of what they do."\*

The restoration, I repeat it, of such portion of our rites and discipline, as in the lapse of years hath been decayed through negligence, error, or opposition, must be brought about gradually and systematically, with sound discretion, and under authority.

Happy should we ourselves be, my reverend brethren, in this our generation; happy would he be who is appointed our special overseer in the Lord, if, by the kindly exercise of a parental influence on the one side, and the promptitude of filial obedience on the other, that work of godly restoration may, in any degree, advance; that so the fabric of our holy and apostolic church—her breaches repaired, her bulwarks strengthened and extended, her sons duly armed and trained to fight her battles, faithful to each other, and faithful to the great captain of their salvation—might stand forth conspicuous as a model of uniformity and strength and devotedness and brotherly affection. Then might she rightfully claim the honourable title bestowed upon her in times past, "the glory of the reformed churches." Then might we hope to see our national policy sanctified by the principles of a sound christianity; and then, not only through the length and

\* Eccles: Pol: book v. sect. 65.



breadth of our mighty empire, but among all people, nations, and languages, should the "word of God have free course and be glorified."\* Those thousand springs of religious bounty, whose precious waters too often flow in devious and opposing courses, bearing with them little of joy or of fertility, should then be concentrated into one mighty river, "the streams whereof should make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed: God shall help her and that right early."† Then should the prophetic exhortation of the Psalmist be answered to the letter, "Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, ascribe unto the Lord worship and power. Ascribe unto the Lord the honour due unto his name, bring presents and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth stand in awe of Him!"‡

\* 2 Thessalonians iii, 1.

† Psalm xli, 4, 5.

‡ Psalm xcvi, 7, 8, 9.





